

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KINSHA 07621 201433Z

46

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FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4167

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 7621

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CG, US

SUBJECT: BESEMGIMANA MAKES A POSITIVE GESTURE TO U.S.
BUSINESS COMMUNITY

1. TODAY, AUGUST 19, I CALLED ON BISENGIMANA TO GO OVER A LIST OF QUESTIONS PENDING. AFTER HAVING DEALT WITH AMBASSADOR VANCE'S MESSAGE OF RECENT DATE, CODEL CLARK AND ARRANGMENTS TO PROCURE THE LIST OF IMPORTS THAT COULD BE FINANCED UNDER THE EXIM CREDIT AND OTHER PARTS OF OUR PROPOSED ASSISTANCE, WE WERE INTERRUPTED, FIRST BY THE SOUND OF A HELICOPTER JUST OUTSIDE THE WINDOW AND SECOND BY A PHONECALL. BISENGIMANA PICKED UP THE PHONE AND AFTER LISTENING FOR A FEW MOMENTS TOLD ME THAT HE HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED BY THE PRESIDENT TO ACCOMPANY HIM ON THE HELICOPTER VISITS TO VARIOUS SCHOOLS IN THE KINSHASA REGION. BISENGIMANA EXCUSED HIMSELF AND SAID THAT WE WOULD CONTINUE OUR DISCUSSION ANOTHER TIME.

2. WITH AT LEAST TEN MORE ITEMS ON MY LIST, I ALLOWED TO MYSELF AS HOW I HAD TO GET ONE MORE PITCH IN AND AS HE MOVED TO THE DOOR I JOINED HIM AND SAID THAT I WOULD ACCOMPANY HIM TO THE HELICOPTER. AS WE WALKED ALONG, I SAID THAT AS HE KNEW AMERICAN BUSINESS HAD ADVANCED CLOSE TO 30 MILLION DOLLARS OF ITS OWN MONEY DURING THIS TIME OF CRISIS IN ZAIRE'S FINANACIAL SITUATION HE NODDED AND SAID YES, HE KNEW THAT AND APPRECIATED IT. I SAID THAT AS HE KNEW THE U.S.GOVERNMENT HAD LONG COUNSELED PATIENCE TO OUR
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 KINSHA 07621 201433Z

BUSINESSMEN. HE SAID HE KNEW THAT AND APPRECIATED

OUR EFFORTS. AND AS WE WERE NEARING THE OUTSIDE DOOR I SAID THAT WE COULD TALK UNTIL WE WERE BLUE IN THE FACE BUT THAT AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN HAD JUST ABOUT REACHED THE END OF THEIR ROPE AND THEY DID NOT KNOW THAT PERHAPS THE IMF KEY WAS WITHIN REACH. I THEN SAID THAT THAT VERY EVENING I WAS GIVING A RECEPTION FOR OUR NEW ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL CHIEF

COUNSELOR, MR. NETTLES, AND THAT THE ENTIRE AMERICAN BUSINESS COMMUNITY WOULD BE THERE. I TOLD BISENGIMANA THAT IF HE WERE TO COME TO THE RECEPTION--EVEN FOR TWO MINUTES, MAKE AN APPEARANCE, SAY NOTHING, AND DEPART--THE SIGNAL WOULD BE CLEAR TO THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY, AND IT WOULD MEAN A LOT. BIESENGIMANA STOPPED AND ASKED ME WHERE I LIVED. I TOLD HIM I HAD LEFT AN INVITATION ON HIS DESK AND THEREIN HE WOULD FIND A MAP, WITH THAT HE NODDED AND WENT OUT THE DOOR TO BOARD THE HELICOPTER AND ACCOMPANY MOBUTU ON HIS TOUR.

3. I HAD NO REAL HOPE THAT BIESENGIMANA, WHO IS NOT KNOWN FOR ATTENDING DIPLOMATIC RECEPTIONS, WOULD SEE HIS WAY CLEAR TO MAKE MY PARTY. BUT LATER THAT EVENING IN THE RECEPTION LINE, I WAS DELIGHTED TO SEE HIM ARRIVE AND AS IT TURNED OUT TO SEE HIM STAY FOR WELL OVER AN HOUR. ALL OF THE KEY AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN HAD A CHANCE TO SHAKE HIS HAND AND SOME, LIKE CIS, A CHANCE TO RAISE THEIR PARTICULAR PROBLEMS OF CASH FLOW. IMF REP. DINI, WHO IS IN TOWN, ALSO CAME. HE AND BIESENGIMANA SPENT A GOOD TWENTY MINUTES IN THE CORNER TOGETHER TALKING, AND DINI TOLD ME WHEN HE LEFT THAT THINGS SEEMED TO BE GOING WELL. EARLIER THAT DAY WHEN I WAS IN BIESENGIMANA'S OFFICE I MENTIONED THE DINI VISIT AND HOW PLEASED WE WERE THAT HE HAD ARRIVED. BIESENGIMANA HAD PICKED UP THE PHONE AND CALLED SOMEONE--I PRESUMED IN MOBUTU'S ENTOURAGE, AND HAD ARRANGED A LUNCH WITH MOBUTU FOR DINI, SAMBWA AND THE MINISTER OF FINANCE, BOFSSA. DINI TOLD ME AS HE LEFT MY PARTY THAT THINGS SEEMED TO BE GOING WELL BUT THAT HE HAD JUST BEGUN THE DISCUSSIONS AND RESULTS WOULD NOT BE CLEAR UNTIL FRIDAY.

4. BIESENGIMANA'S DECISION TO COME TO THE RECEPTION WAS A MASTER STROKE AND IT HAD ITS INTENDED EFFECT. U.S. CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 KINSHA 07621 201433Z

BUSINESSMEN, THE ENTIRE ZAIRIAN PRESS CORPS, AND A GOOD PART OF THE DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY WHO WERE PRESENT WERE UNANIMOUS IN THEIR COMMENTS TO ME THAT BIESENGIMANA'S PRESENCE WAS A SIGNIFICANT SIGNAL. I FULLY INTEND TO FOLLOW UP WITH THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY, NOTABLE AT THE REGULAR MEETING OF KEY LEADERS WHICH WILL TAKE PLACE AT MY RESIDENCE NEXT WEDNESDAY, TO PURSUE THE RELATIVELY MORE OPTIMISTIC LINE THAT WE CAN NOW AFFORD TO TAKE AS THE IMF MOVES INTO PLACE.

I ALSO INTEND TO FEED BACK TO BISENGIMANA THE DELIGHTED REACTION
OF THE U.S. BUSINESS COMMUNITY TO HIS PRESENCE AT THE RECEPTION.
WALKER

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